

History in Brief of the Banning Family

John and Mary Banning of the city of Reading, Berkshire, England came to this country in the year 1815, and settled in the city of New York. Mary, his wife, was married to him at the age of sixteen; he was then a widower with grown-up children. His business was that of a gun manufacturer, and he employed quite a number of workmen. He was a very important person, and highly esteemed by his friends and neighbors. It was evidenced by the attention paid him as he with his eldest son John stood on the rear of the stage coach ready to depart from his home to sail for America. The street was filled with people who gathered to pay their last respects to him, and the picture of his figure as they waved away waving an adieu, was vivid to the memory of his eldest daughter Eliza, who, after a period of 80 years related the incident with much emotion to some of her children. He came over with his oldest son John and the remainder of the family (wife and nine children) came in the vessel on its next trip. He was seven weeks on the water, and the last of them five. Sailing vessels then only were known.

A letter written by him on his arrival in New York and sent to his wife who is in possession of the Oliver family for more than 80 years, and would be interesting to insert here if it could be found. The recollections of it are as follows:

"New York, U. S. A.

My dear Mother,

We arrived here after a seven weeks voyage glad indeed to be once more on land. For many days during our voyage the sea was most tempestuous so that many times we expected to go to the bottom.

The morning we arrived Mr. Colgate and son came on board to greet us. The view of the town and of Brooklyn as we approached it is very beautiful - "emboved as it is among trees." (This is all I can remember of it, J.C.B.)

A view of the buildings opposite the Banning home in England, painted by Frederick Seatchard, and presented to Eliza Banning is still extant. He came over in same vessel and soon after married Maria, the second daughter of the family.

Of John Banning's antecedents nothing is known.

The point referred to consists of the parish church (St. Lawrence) the town hall and an archway through that led to a commons where the children of the neighborhood went to play.

As long as the family lived in England a governess was employed to instruct the children - who was very particular in her vocation. The mother, Mary Banning, was a very energetic and methodical woman.

Mary Banning was of noble birth. The great great grandfather was Lord Arthur Hamilton, he engaged in a rebellion against the government in 1715, occurring Oct. 17th, 1715. He owned a large estate which he lost in this rebellion, was exiled. With the hope of recovering the estate, Mary Banning, with her husband were Congregationalists, and her children christened by the river in St. Lawrence church, an Episcopal church recorded in a book of the church of England.

John Banning (Sr.) died April 17, 1820 of consumption.

Mary his wife, died July 2nd, 1832 of general debility, at the age of her son Alphonse, who has lived many years.